

detention in custody for some 19 days. The case was decided against the plaintiff, who had to pay costs of the suit.

### *Criminal Cases.*

113. Criminal proceedings were instituted against one of the Dépôt officers serving in the Dángs, Gulábchand Prággi, for having levied excess fees upon produce removed, and thereafter under fear of detection for having burnt some portion of his records. The Political Agent, Khándesh, before whom he was arraigned, sentenced him to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

### *(c). IMPROVEMENT OF FOREST GROWTH.*

#### *(1). Natural Reproduction.*

114. In the Thána forests natural reproduction was vigorous during the year and would be perfect if fires and cattle trespass could be wholly checked. The coppice in most of the exploited coupes grows fast, though the teak excels other species in this respect during the first years of its re-growth. The shoots also suffer to a certain extent, when they first commence to appear, from the browsing of wild animals such as *Portax pictus*, *Tetroceros gudricornis* and *Cervulus arcus*; the neighbourhood of a recently felled coupe being almost a certain find for one or other of these animals. In a good many of the compartments exploited in the earlier years of the Working Plan rotation, i.e. in 1887-88, a dense crop of promising mixed forests is now to be seen, and the progress made by each year of successful closure in dominating the grass, reeds and other noxious growth has secured the compartments from all possible danger from fires. So long as there is a sufficient area open to grazing for the wants of the people, it is not advisable to shorten the limit of closure of ten years fixed in the Working Plan, for the longer the young stock is left undisturbed the better it will grow.

115. The fires of the year having not proved disastrous, except in the forests on the Tánsa Lake catchment area, and the rainfall having been ample though late, a plentiful crop of seedlings, it is very natural to expect, should have established themselves, as it is invariably found that they do so when the above circumstances are present.

116. The plague of caterpillars noted by Mr. Shuttleworth as having probably interfered with the flowering and seeding of the teak, by eating all their leaves and checking the growth of trees, was fortunately absent during the year.

117. It is worthy of notice that the *Inga dulcis*, which was experimentally cultivated on the Thána-Panvel road, has now become firmly established and reproduces itself naturally. Several self-sown seedlings are now found in the vicinity of the parent trees on the borders of the adjoining forests.

118. In the Surat Division natural reproduction is somewhat retarded by fires, and as a whole is not very satisfactory. Bulsár and Chikhli ranges are, however, exceptions to the general rule, and are a splendid example of what Nature can do in this respect. The remarks of Mr. Lely, the Collector, on this subject are worth quoting:—

“Some of the forests in the south of the district though small are pictures. In Mándvi Táluka the soil is inferior, but the Department is there reclothing large tracts of land and vindicating itself as one of the most useful agencies of the country.”

119. Natural reproduction in the Panch Maháls Division is to be found in small patches few and far between, but wherever it presents itself it is good. Owing to the state of the forests being generally far from fully stocked, it only asserts itself very slowly; and, until the people learn to respect the closures better than they do at present, prospects of clothing denuded areas solely by natural means are very remote.

#### *(2). Artificial Reproduction.*

120. Cultural operations in this Circle are, as a rule, confined to the exploited compartments and other closures in order to assist natural reproduction. Regular plantations properly so called, being very small in extent, appear to have